

Alaska & The Voyage of Understanding

January 23 - March 27, 2016

President Harding left Washington D.C., in the summer of 1923 to travel across the country and visit the U.S. territory of Alaska. Cabinet members, including Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover and his wife, Lou Henry Hoover, were members of his traveling party. His trip was called the “Voyage of Understanding”. The two month trip was designed to give President Harding opportunities to hear from Americans and to get feedback on his presidency. He was the first U.S. President to visit Alaska and Canada.

Harding wanted to create a new policy that would both protect and wisely use Alaska’s natural resources. As Secretary of Commerce, Hoover had an interest in Alaskan fisheries because it was their primary industry. “We came to Alaska in the hope that by a better understanding of the problems of Alaska we might give better service from the Government to the people of Alaska; that by personal contact we would come to know you and we would come to know your vision of Alaska, your future and your ideals,” Herbert Hoover, Sitka Alaska, July 22, 1923.

Hoover’s assistant, William Mullendore, ([Mullendore](#)) documented the trip in a journal and in letters to his wife. Mullendore gives almost daily accounts of the activities of the presidential party. These writings will guide you as you travel *Voyage of Understanding* through the eyes of William Mullendore.

Some of the items displayed include:

Oil paintings by ‘The Alaskan Four’

Itinerary booklets from the trip

Totem poles

Artisan gifts given to Harding

Photographs from the trip